Huddersfield Local History Society

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Huddersfield

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLetter

No.8 1988

WILLIAM PONTEY: Huddersfield's 19th century Evelyn.
Edward J Law.

There is in the Tomlinson collection of pamphlets at West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees, one of those vitriolic broadsheets, so beloved by the gossips of Georgian days, which reads as follows:–

A MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION FOR OLD GRINNING P*NT*Y.

Here lies the remains of GRINNING P*NT*Y who departed this life on the_____ day of _____182_in the ___year of his age. Being a SCOTCHMAN by birth and inheriting a large share of genuine CALEDONIAN ABHORRENCE to honest labour and industry he endeavoured to live without them. This GREAT OBJECT was effected by WORMING into his own possession the PROPERTY and the AFFAIRS of other people which, when once he laid hold of, no earthly power could ever afterwards get back again. Smoothing over his HEIDEGGERIAN FACE with Puritan Hypocrisy and Scotch MODESTY as much as the harsh contour of it would allow and assuming the GARB of disinterested FRIENDSHIP he wheedled himself into the most secret CONCERNS of those who were weak enough to listen to him. Thus obtaining a power over them which he invariably turned to their Disadvantage and Injury and not unfrequently to their_____. He lived as a Nurseryman, Seedsman and Grocer at H_____F__D for a number of years where uniting with a banker called I_____M in the drawing and circulation of Accomodation Bills he made himself reponsible for more than he ever possessed. When the holders of them were intending to seek Retribution he contrived by a secret transfer of his property to a KINSMAN to preserve it from sequestration to the benefit of his CREDITORS then setting his TEETH in stern defiance he laughed them to scorn for placing their confidence in him. His VIRTUE! laid in his ruffian like stick which he brandished with violent malignity at any one who opposed him. His RELIGION!! was in vollies of bitter curses against those who asked him to pay what he owed them. His FAITH!!! was fixed upon the loopholes of the LAW which serve as backdoors for Miscreants to slip out of and escape from justice. His HOPE!!!! was that none of his creditors would venture to seek redress for their grievances. His CHARITY!!!!! was exemplified in his attempt to deprive the poor of their annual Dole. He died at an obscure cottage in L___T__N in the Parish of K____H___N Execrated by the Poor whom he constantly oppressed; despised by the Rich who he bullied and insulted; and hated by all those who had suffered from his base proceedings.

The subject of the attack was William Pontey, nurseryman, seedsman and grocer, of Huddersfield, Lindley and Lepton. The banker was one of the Inghams, Benjamin or Joshua, who were partners in the Huddersfield Commercial Bank from 1802 to their respective deaths in 1811 and 1814. Pontey was party to a series of property transactions[1] between 1800 and 1817 as assignee in bankruptcy of Silvester Sikes, a Huddersfield banker, and William Denton of Elland, a merchant. Other parties to the transactions included George Townend of York, Thomas Rishworth of Wakefield and John Ikin of Mirfield, all bankers; perhaps an indication of Pontey's aspirations.

Nothing is known of the accusation in the broadsheet that Pontey attempted to deprive the poor of some annual charity, but he is known to have acted for the Overseers of the Poor. In 1788 he, with two other townsmen, Edward Hawksby and Godfrey Berry, had prepared a valuation of the Township of Huddersfield [2] for Poor Rate purposes. The possibility of such work plus the opportunity to supply groceries and seeds to the poorhouse may well have prompted Pontey to forge close links with, and possibly become involved in the management of, that institution. As a business man contacts gained through holding public or semi-public office could only be beneficial and it may be noted in the same vein that Pontey was churchwarden at the Parish Church from 1804 to 1811.

The name Pontey is first noted in Huddersfield in 1785 when William was recorded in the Town Book[3], supplying seeds, treacle, ginger, sulphur and candles to the Huddersfield Poorhouse. It is thought that he came to the town at about that time from Kilnwick in the East Riding where, in 1782, a William Pontey was chief gardener at Kilnwick Hall.[4]

In 1791 William Pontey was one of the parties to a proposal submitted to Thomas Thornhill of Fixby seeking a lease for the establishment of a scribbling mill at Hirst in Longwood[5]. Whilst the other parties were clothiers looking to enhance their trade there was no apparent reason why Pontey should have joined the consortium, probably he saw the venture purely as an investment opportunity.

It would appear that Pontey had some capital: by 1800 he was occupying land at Laund Hill, Lindley[6], where cottages continued to be owned by the family for the next 60 years. He was also interested in land at Honley Moor and a small plantation of woodland described as

Pontey Wood on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848, and still in existence, may well have been planted by him. The same map shows Pontey House nearby; the building still stands, in a field below Pontey Farm, known now as Pontey Cottages.

In a pamphlet[7] which he wrote in about 1810 outlining the pitfalls of canal speculation, with particular reference to his own experiences with the Huddersfield Canal, he is shown to have been involved with the laying out of the Foss navigation in 1802. It is clear that he was not satisfied to restrict his activities to the one area in which he was an acknowledged expert, forestry.

He published three books on that subject. His first work was the Profitable Planter which was published in April 1800 by Sikes & Smart of Huddersfield (Silvester Sikes was a printer as well as a banker) and had run to a third edition by 1809. The Forest Pruner appeared in 1805 and The Rural Improver in 1822. His ability in the field was recognised, he was retained as a planter and pruner by the Dukes of Bedford, and John Harvey in his book Early Nurseryman, records that he had been described as "the Evelyn of the 19th century."

William was by no means the only member of the family involved with horticulture. His two brothers, Alexander and Francis were also nurserymen, the former appears to have had a substantial business at the Upperhead Row in Leeds from the 1780's to his death in 1821. There is a reference to the business in the diary of Thomas Butler[8] "Thursday 5th May 1796: . . to Leeds . . rode up to Mr. Pontey's garden to look at his Hot House and to purchase some Green House plants, but he had only two that we had not." On Alexander's death the business passed to his widow, Martha, but was run by his nephew Francis, son of Francis. Francis senior was at Lepton from the 1790's, possibly in partnership with William who was variously at Huddersfield and Lindley down to 1817 and subsequently at Bridge End, Lepton. William was married but appears to have had no children. Alexander had children but they do not appear to have followed the family calling.

It was left to Francis Pontey's children to continue the tradition of nursery and seedsmen in this area. The eldest son, William, who inherited his uncle William's property at Lindley, conducted the nursery at Lepton, died in 1862 and was succeeded by one of his sons. The second son, Francis established a nursery at Oaks Hill in Almondbury, but is noted also at Leeds, running his late uncle's business, and Dewsbury. John, the third son was a grocer and seedsman in Huddersfield, was made bankrupt[9] in 1829 and was ejected from his house, shop and garden[10] in 1845. Two younger sons also entered the trade: Charles was at Upperhead Row in Leeds in 1834 presumably having succeeded his brother Francis at his uncle's shop and nursery, and Henry Pearson Pontey was in partnership with brother William in 1851 at which date they were employing twelve men.

There was another branch of the family in Plymouth, where an Alexander Pontey, noted as a nurseryman[11] in the 1830's and 1840's, was probably a relative of John Pontey of the same town from whom copies of the Rural Improver were advertised as being available in 1822.

William Pontey, the subject of the broadsheet, was in failing health in 1822 and died in 1830 when an obituary in the Leeds Mercury described him as "the eminent ornamental and landscape gardener." Thus we are left with two perspectives on the man, on the one hand a talented and renowned horticulturalist with a a national reputation, and on the other, an avaricious and scheming trickster, vilified in his own town.

SOURCES

1. West Yorkshire Registry of Deeds, Wakefield.
2. West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees KC165/222.
3. West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees.
4. John Harvey, Early Gardening Catalogues.
5. West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees T/L/XXV/9.
6. West Yorkshire Registry of Deeds, Wakefield.
7. William Pontey, A Short Account of the Huddersfield Canal etc.
8. AE,BF & HM Butler, The Diary of Thomas Butler of Kirstall Forge, Yorkshire 1796–9.
9. Leeds Mercury, 2.1.1830.
10. West Yorkshire Archives, Kirklees DD/RE/c/13,4.7.1845.
11. Ray Desmond, Dictionary of British & Irish Botanists & Horticulturalists.

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LUDDITES IN MY LIFE: Some Reflections from Lesley Kipling

One way or another, a great deal of my life seems to be taken up by Luddites – talking about them, reading about them, thinking about them, writing about them. Even as I travel to and from work on the bus I regularly pass John Wood's Cropping Shop, Fishers Shop, the site of the Horsfall murder, Dungeon Wood or Milnsbridge House. (Yes, Metro Kirklees do have some odd bus routes!) And each time I pass these places, I find myself thinking once again about the men involved. I often feel that if I ever bumped into them I would know them instantly, so much do they seem like living people to me.

You have probably come to the conclusion by this time that I am completely batty, and you may well be right, but there have been periods of my life where I have breathed, slept and eaten Luddites, metaphorically speaking, and this has left its mark.

My most frequent Luddite activity (not to be misconstrued I hope!) is to go out and give talks, which I do very frequently. The groups which I visit vary from the well informed and keenly interested, through to the less informed but interest to those who quite frankly would prefer me to give a talk on the most inexpensive way of buying disposable nappies. The reactions of various groups are obviously different. To some extent my views on the Luddites are not conventional, and many would disagree with some of them. However, after many years of researching the Luddites and their background and thinking of them both in the context of their own period and the present day, I have come to conclusions which I believe firmly, and would argue with anyone who held other views, putting my own case in as reasoned a manner as possilbe.

So, on all occasions I am heckled. I am quite prepared for this, indeed I expect it, and without saying anyone else was incorrect, I would simply state the reasons for my own views. Frequently I am asked questions which I cannot answer. Sometimes this is because there is no answer, or at least none that I know of, at other times it is because the question is so unexpected that I have never thought of it myself. In either case, I do try to discover the answer if it is possible, because research never ends, and I am constantly adding odds and ends to my store of knowledge. For this reason I am also always grateful for any snippets of information or tradition that any of my audience may have to offer.

Because of my views, I often approach an audience with some trepidation – with some groups I can expect a sympathetic hearing, some I am unsure of, and with others I tend to anticipate a touch of hostility. However, I've never had an audience walk out on me yet, though there's always a first time! More commonly, people will nod off – I don't mind, as it is easy to do if you are sitting in a warm room listening to someone droning on, and often feel like it myself after a hard day at work – the only difference is that I have something to keep me awake! I always say that I never show slides for this reason – turning out the lights only encourages people to nod off quicker! Often when booked to give a talk, I feel as I stagger home from work that the last thing I want to do is set off again, usually in foul weather. But I have never lost my enthusiasm for my subject, no matter how often I repeat my talk, and I soon shake off my lethargy – after all, it is new to my audience if not to me.

Normally when giving a talk there is only a limited amount of time, so I always concentrate on giving the background to the Luddite risings, rather than talking about the events of the year. It may be less interesting but I feel that this is one of the least understood aspects of Luddite history and also one of the most important. I always point out that there are numerous books available which record events and those who are interested can read more for themselves.

The other main aspect of my life with the Luddites is working with the Media. That sounds very grand – much grander than it is! I occasionally manage to supply stories for the local newspapers, though naturally enough they prefer to write these up themselves. I have also done two broadcasts for Radio Leeds, both of which, unknown to myself, went out live – on the second occasion I was told it was to be recorded, but they changed their minds at the last moment, which unnerved me somewhat! Both were reasonably successful, but alas, I have no recording of them. I'm not sure whether it was more disturbing to sit in the Town Hall Cellar speaking into space, or to have the interviewer walk around Red House with me complete with microphone, cable and earphones!

Television is of course the most glamorous medium to be involved in – or so they say! I quickly learned from them all the jargon – particularly the need for 'visuals' – these are very important! So important that the presence of Marsden stocks close to Enoch Taylor's grave inspire an urge to have Luddites filmed in the stocks. No, I said, there wasn't any actual record of this. Disappointment all round! It is very difficult to curb the enthusiasm of television crews for this kind of theatrical effect. Real life is never quite exciting enough. My general observation is that BBC2 are the most upper class, ITV have the most money, and Look North are on a tight schedule and a tight budget.

The programmes I was involved with were a "Chronicle" episode on Riots, shot in the snow, during which I dined with Simon Winchester, later to languish in an Argentinian jail during the Falklands War (very distinguished conversation about Nannies and Public School life, and the meal was a disaster) and more recently Thames Television's "The Luddites". This was quite fascinating, as I worked with them over a period of months and they kept on phoning with awkward questions like 'What did the Luddites do in their spare time?' I think my answer was 'not a lot'. I also watched them do some of the filming, which was quite an experience, and very enjoyable. They did tell me I would object to some things they had done in the final film, and they were right, but on the whole I approved of the programme and felt that they had captured the spirit of the times.

My other experience was a brief item for "Look North" when I had the distinction of being interviewed. This was very nerve racking, and the interviewer had such beautiful blue eyes that I

kept mine firmly fixed on the ground in case I dissolved into giggles. This was made all the more likely by the sight of the sound engineer with his furry microphone creeping round my feet! The questions were tough too, and to a large extent quite unexpected, so I had to think fast! Alas, I have no record of this historic recording either, so I am lost to posterity. However, the crews were quite charming and a lot of laughs!

Finally, I am involved in writing about the Luddites. "On the Trail of the Luddites" was published in 1982 (hence the chance for "Look North" viewers to see a film of me staring at my feet.) It was based on my original historical notes, but Nick Hall had the idea of turning it into a trail format and it was he who walked and biked the route, as I am no athlete! Despite vigorous protests at proof reading stage, the first edition came out with glaring errors which made me shudder, but these were corrected in the reprint. The book has been a great success, I believe, but sadly, despite what was said at the time, the publishers at Pennine Heritage do not pay Royalties. So neither Nick nor I are a penny better off, and of course, we have nothing in writing, to my Solicitors' regret!

My latest venture has been to write the introduction to the reprint of D.F.E. Sykes' Luddite novel 'Ben O' Bill's'. This wonderful little book was becoming very scarce, and a group of friends decided to mount a rescue attempt by publishing a reprint. I was honoured to be asked to write an introduction to such a marvellous book, and as someone said, I did come cheaper than most. As with all publishing ventures it was a risk, and so far none of the Lambsbreath Publications have even made back their original investment. An awful lot of our friends will be getting 'Ben O' Bill's' for Christmas! Having said that the venture has been fun, and an interesting experience for all of us, and a fascinating book has been returned to circulation. So, my most recent Luddite activity is giving publicity to Ben O' Bills and selling as many copies as possible. All who have read it have thoroughly enjoyed it, so here comes the plug – available from the publishers at Old Vicarage, Scammonden at £12.50 plus 25p p.& p. It would make a wonderful Christmas present, as many of my friends and relatives are about to discover, so bear it in mind when writing your Christmas shopping list!

Why Lambsbreath publications many have asked? It's a long story, out of Cold Comfort Farm via homemade wine to the name of a publishing group, but it meant something to all of us, and my kitten, born shortly after publication date, has been named Lambsbreath in commemmoration!

Luddites have led me into many fields, I often wonder where they'll lead me next! But I still find the subject as fascinating as ever, and will continue to pursue my enquiries and activities as long as I can. And who knows, one day, when I finally meet up with George Mellor and his comrades in the Happy Hunting Ground, I shall be able to discover the final answer to all my questions, and I shall at last know for sure. The only trouble is, I don't suppose they'll let me come back to tell you all the answers from my ultimate piece of research!

SIR DAVID RADCLIFFE: A great Victorian son of Huddersfield

Edward J Law.

David Radcliffe was born in August 1834, in the reign of William IV, at Netherton Fold, Netherton. He was the youngest son of Amos Radcliffe[1], a clothier, whose parents, also of Netherton were Charles and Elizabeth Radcliffe. Amos's wife was Olive, daughter of Benjamin Jepson of Almondbury who had moved to Lindley following his marriage to Mally Morton in 1791.

Early in his life David's family moved to Liverpool, in those days a thriving and prosperous city; a great port and centre of international trade. David was placed with a James Crellin of Lime Street, an engineer and brassfounder, and a member of the city council[2]. This was to prove an excellent choice and must have been instrumental in shaping the future life of the young man. No doubt it was from his master's example of public service that he drew inspiration in later life, and there can have been few businesses better placed to benefit in financial terms from the advances of the Victorian era.

In 1860 he married Mary Elizabeth, daughter of George Clarke of Wootton Wawen, Warwickshire, and in due course succeeded Mr. Crellin in business. He appears to have assured his own fortune from involvement in railway contracts. By 1882 he was able to retire from trade when there followed a series of directorships of major trading and financial concerns in the area, notably of the Liverpool Electric Supply Co. Ltd., Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Co., North Western Bank and the Liverpool United Tramways & Omnibus Co.

He was a Conservative in politics and had been a City Councillor and Alderman for some years when in 1884 he was elected Mayor of the City. So ably did he fulfil the demanding requirements of that important office that he received the singular honour of being re-elected for the ensuing year; the first time in the recorded history of the City that the office had been occupied by the same person for two successive years.

Radcliffe does not appear to have lost sight of his own origins for among the innovations of his mayoralty were receptions for the working classes and the distribution at Christmas of 1,000 hot-pots, each sufficient to serve eight or ten people, which became an annual event.

The highlight of his period as Mayor was in May 1886 when a project which he had initiated in February of that year reached fruition. The event was the Exhibition of Navigation, Travelling, Commerce and Manufacture which was opened by Queen Victoria on 11th May. Despite the rain which had fallen incessantly throughout the night vast crowds lined the route to the exhibition ground, including 60,000 Sunday School scholars. Following the opening ceremony his Worship the Mayor received a knighthood at the hands of the Queen who presented him with the first copy of Angeli's engraved picture of Her Majesty; his wife received a diamond bracelet[3]. The exhibition had 450,000 exhibitors and at its close on 8th November had attracted over 2½ millon visitors.

Radcliffe's background does not seem to have been widely known, even in his native town. The Huddersfield Examiner of the day carried an extensive report of the opening ceremony, but whilst noting that "Her Majesty knighted the Mayor of Liverpool" made no mention of his place of birth, which they surely would have done had it been known to them.

The occasion of the exhibition opening was not the first time that Radcliffe had welcomed royalty to the city; in January he had entertained the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, and his two sons, who had been in Liverpool for the opening of the Mersey Tunnel.

Radcliffe was further honoured in France when in 1886 the French Government made him an officer of the Legion of Honour. He lived at Thurstaston Hall on the Wirral and in 1892/3 he was High Sheriff for the County of Cheshire, his under-sheriff being his son Frederick Morton Radcliffe, a Liverpool solicitor.

Sources.

1. A.C. Fox-Davies, Armorial Families.
2. B. Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour.
3. Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 12.5.1886.

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"IN THE STEPS OF ADAM EYRE"

Adam Eyre was a yeoman farmer and Parliamentary Army officer who lived at Haslehead in the parish of Penistone. Nothing especially remarkable in that perhaps, except that Eyre was also a diarist and the surviving fragments of his diary provide a very personal insight into local life in the late 1640's. (1)

Times have changed a great deal since then, but remarkably the places involved have changed comparatively little and thanks to the researches of Dr. Eagles it is still possible to see and appreciate something of the diarist's world.

So it was that on a typically cool, but fine, June evening almost half of the Society's membership set off from Huddersfield to follow "in the steps of Adam Eyre". As these lie within a still pleasantly rural area of rolling hills, farms and tiny hamlets, it seemed quite appropriate to make the first stop at a barn on a working farm. Not just any barn of course, but Gunthwaite Hall barn, "the finest timbered barn in our district". (2) Built in the 16th century by Godfrey Bosville, its massive roof timbers and three pairs of doors still earn their keep by sheltering nearly half an acre of well used cattle pens. While the farmstead as a whole, with its barn, Elizabethan outbuildings and ancient oak tree forms a unique enclave, spoilt only by the absence of Gunthwaite Hall itself, once the home of the powerful Bosville family. The present farm house is relatively modern, but its grounds contain remains of the former Hall gardens that Eyre must have often visited on his visits to the Bosville's steward.

From Gunthwaite, the trail led on through Ingbirchworth and Penistone, noting the various houses where Captain Eyre left his mark and his debts, before arriving at Bullhouse. Still just a tiny hamlet on a minor country lane, this was nevertheless an important place to Eyre as the much visited home of his close friend Adam Rich.

Rich's son Sylvanus built the present gable-fronted house in 1655 at the head of a trackway to Eyre's own estate just across the valley. But the most distinctive feature of Bullhouse is the small Independent chapel, with attached minister's house, built in 1692 by the Rich family. The dark little house is no longer a home, but the chapel, a "plain oblong with porch" according to Pevsner, is still in use and will be visited at our October conference.

Bullhouse overlooks the gaunt remains of the former electrified Woodhead railway line, a form of transport undreamt of by the diarist whose own frequent journeyings were made on foot, or perched precariously on the back of a mare from whom he was parted with painful frequency. Even today some of his haunts are rather remote and some determined walking was necessary to reach Ranah, once the home of Christopher Marsden; neighbour, friend and eventual

adversary. This isolated house is now being renovated to form a modern dwelling and several members paused to inspect the efforts of the enthusiastic owners. For the rest of the party, it was a brisk descent down a green track into the wooded valley of the infant River Don. This is now a peaceful back water, but in Eyre's day water rights were a serious matter and "ill language" passed between him and his neighbours when a "wayre" was built across the river. Despite this it remained a favoured place, close to his own home, and he often bathed and fished in its waters.

Leaving the area in a westerly direction, there was just time to snatch a glimpse of Ellentree, in the hills near Dunford Bridge, the birth place of Mrs. Eyre and home of her father, with whom Eyre enjoyed an uneasy relationship clouded, as ever, by financial problems. Then back to Huddersfield by way of Holmfirth, where he often attended chapel, purchased food (14/- for a flitch of bacon) and in April 1647, celebrated his 33rd birthday in characteristically individual style with a sermon followed by drinks with "my father in law and my coz. (Morehous) at Godfrey Cuttill's".

1. "A Dyurnall, or a catalogue of all my accions and expences from the 1st of January 1646(7)." In **Yorkshire diaries and autobiographies in the 17th and 18th centuries.** Surtees Society, Vol 65, 1877. The original has also been deposited with the Kirklees district archives.
2. Walton, James, **Early timbered buildings of the Huddersfield district.** Tolson Memorial museum 1955.

THE OCTOBER CONFERENCE

This year's conference differed from its predecessors in two respects: it was held outside Huddersfield and the business of the day was purely historical, unimpeded by the constitutional requirements of the A.G.M. Developing the theme of Adam Eyre and 'his' country initiated in June, this event was centred on the town of Penistone in whose parish Eyre had lived – though even that redoubtable gentleman might have had some problems of recognition on a day when the "season of mists" contrived to blot out the Don Valley with unexpected thoroughness.

Fortunately the programme commenced with a lively and (most importantly) illustrated talk by the enthusiastic historian David Hey, which soon dispelled the gloom and illuminated something of Penistone's present as well as its past. The Parish Church, just across the road from our venue, has early medieval origins but the town only began to thrive after the grant of a market charter in 1699. Growing prosperity in the 18th century provided a market hall, grammar school and the turnpike from Cheshire. In the following century the railway came and the town made products as varied as steel and its own distinctive 'Penistone' cloth. But industry was not the theme of the day and the second speaker, Dr. Addy, took us back into the 17th century and Penistone's part in the Civil War.

This turned out to be more of a supporting role than a starring part, for Penistone was not a front-line town, although a battle was fought at nearby Tankersley. Its problems were more parochial: assembling reluctant troops, raising money (6/8d for each trained soldier) and fighting for the soul of Penistone Church. The townspeople and their leading family, the Bosvilles, were staunch Puritans and after Parliament's eviction of the incumbent, made the Church a centre of their faith. Dr. Addy described the subsequent machinations with an authoritative but wryly amusing style that made light of a rather sober story which ended with the Restoration and the death of Rev. Henry Swift. The Puritan faithful had to look elswhere, to Bullhouse, where the Rich family had built a new Hall in 1655. This family built, at their own expense, a chapel free of all ecclesiastical influence – especially that of the new Anglican vicar of Penistone. Almost three centuries later it is still in use and after a meal kindly provided by some of our own members, we followed in the steps of those rebellious Puritans to the hamlet of Bullhouse.

When first seen through the thinning mists, the little Chapel looked even more austere and forbidding than it had in June, but appearances can be very deceptive and in this case the blackened walls belied the warmth within. From its painted ceiling to the crimson carpets, polished pews and colourful floral displays, the interior exuded a homely glow – a quality obviously shared by its devoted custodians, Mr. and Mrs. Armitage, who are justifiably proud of its unbroken history. That pride is not confined to the building and Mrs. Armitage drew our attention to the Chapel's focal point, its newly restored pulpit, in order to emphasise that although the halcyon days of up to 200 worshippers are long gone, this is still a very active place of worship.

Halls and chapels co-existing so closely often have a tie of dependence, but at Bullhouse the Chapel has always been staunchly independent. Nevertheless links are close and the Chapel still receives a nominal annual endowment of £10 from the present resident, Mrs. Marsden. Like its neighbour, the Hall has changed little since the 17th century. Its four gables still look out across a walled enclosure that once included a small herb garden, while inside there are panelled rooms, solid period furniture, fine plaster, ceilings and (much appreciated today!) a glowing coal fire. This Hall is obviously still very much a home and Mrs. Marsden must be thanked for consenting to allow admission for our party, it made a fascinating ending to an absorbing day.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Reprints have predominated recently, with Kirklees adding two more titles to their 'Historical Reprints' series. W.B. Crump's **Huddersfield Highways down the Ages** (1949) and the classic **History of the Huddersfield Woollen Industry** (1935) by W.B. Crump and G. Ghorbal are both automatic candidates for any local historian's library, even at a rather pricey £15 and £12 in hardback or £25 and £22 in quarter leather.

A very different sort of book launches the new publisher Lambsbreath Publications. This pocket-sized book, modestly described as a "minor novel by a little known novelist" is **Ben O' Bills, the Luddite,** written almost a century ago by local historian D.F.E. Sykes and his elusive partner, G.H. Walker. Sykes' radical sympathies and historical interests produced a work strongly, but not unreasonably, sympathetic to the Luddite cause. Blending fact and fiction with a certain dramatic licence, the story follows the eponymous hero from clandestine meetings on the moors, through the attack on Rawfolds Mill and the murder of Horsfall to the fateful trials at York. It is this 'inside view' – Ben is a 'cousin' of George Mellor – set against a detailed contemporary background, that gives the book its historical value. As a novel it is something of a period piece and perhaps rather rich in dialect for the modern taste. Nevertheless an interesting read, with an informative introduction by Lesley Kipling, for £12.50.

The Luddites left very little in the way of personal testimony for historians to base their theories on, but recent generations have the opportunity of speaking directly to posterity thanks to the Kirklees Sound Archive, based at Tolson Museum, which has been recording the spoken memories of local people since 1985. Its recently published **Catalogue** (£2) lists around 270 tapes on topics as various as childhood, the cinema, wartime, fashion and ethnic minorities – spoken by people recalling events as distant as the 1890's and as recent as the 1960's.

Personal experiences also figure in the current issue of **Old West Riding** (Summer 1988, pp11 - 13, £1.95). Tom Swallow of Emley first attended his village infants school in 1899, when compulsory education was still comparatively new and rudimentary. Reading, writing and arithmetic, using bead-frames and slates formed the basis of education, before transfer to the British School at the age of seven. Once there, the scholar received "sufficient" education to earn a living – a necessity that came early for the 12 year old as a "half timer" at a Skelmanthorpe mill.

The neighbouring village of Denby Dale has, of course, been celebrating the bicentennial year of its famous pies and local writer David Bostwick has produced an informed and scholarly, but very readable account of this unique form of cookery in **Denby Dale pies: an illustrated history** (Society for Folk Life Studies. £1.50). Unlike many commemorative works this is a real history book with 22 photographs and some revealing quotations, such as the Huddersfield Examiner's premature verdict on the disaster of 1887 "we fancy the last has been seen of the Denby Dale series of great pies".

Like the pies, the local railway line has survived various disasters and its tourist potential is now exploited in **The Penistone line: brief guide and country walks** by 'Swinburn' (Kirklees Libraries, £2.25). Although designed to accompany actual journeys and walks this booklet does include an outline of the railway's history and is well illustrated.

EDITOR'S NOTE

It isn't necessary to write a book to get your work into print, this newsletter is always interested in members' researches. As the inaugural issue stated in 1983 "we would like members to look upon it (the newsletter) as a medium for the publication of their articles and also historical notes and queries arising from thier research" – that invitation still stands, please feel free to accept!